



**2020 Research and Testing:
Proposed Postal Carriers as
Census Bureau Enumerators Pilot**

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Executive Summary

This report summarizes the results of the proposed United States Postal Service (Postal Service or USPS) Letter Carriers as Census Bureau Enumerators Pilot that was planned for implementation during the 2018 End-to-End Census Test. The scope of the pilot was to test and observe the use of Postal Service city letter carriers as Census Bureau enumerators in the context of an existing census test. The Pilot was planned for implementation in two ZIP Codes outside of, but adjacent to, the 2018 End-to-End Census Test site location in Providence County, RI: 02769 North Attleboro, MA, and 02888 Warwick, RI. The pilot was also planned to involve approximately 40 Postal Service city letter carriers operating out of a minimum of two post offices, one in each ZIP Code.

Following a significant planning effort, it was determined that the pilot could not be implemented because of irreconcilable differences between the requirements of 13 U.S.C. (Census Bureau) and 18/39 U.S.C. (USPS), as well as various regulations enacted thereunder. The pilot was canceled upon this determination and close-out activities were conducted.

1. Introduction

The Census Bureau Postal Coordination Team within the Geography Division (GEO) of the Census Bureau proposed a proof-of-concept pilot on the use of USPS letter carriers as Census Bureau Enumerators as part of the 2018 End-to-End Census Test. The idea of using Postal Service city letter carriers to conduct enumeration as part of decennial census operations has been proposed or suggested numerous times in recent years by members of Congress, as well as other advisory and oversight bodies, in response to rising operational costs of both agencies and the need for accurate address data. The reason for this overall sentiment is that the USPS maintains a well-trained and experienced labor force that possesses significant public trust and detailed knowledge of the addressing and residential patterns in the communities they serve. The Census Bureau considered leveraging this workforce—in addition to temporary Census Bureau field staff—to assist with enumeration.

The rationale for the pilot was to test and observe the use of Postal Service city letter carriers as Census Bureau Enumerators in the context of an existing census test and thereby enable the Census Bureau and USPS to respond to repeated stakeholder inquiries about this concept with an evidence-based position. Postal Service city letter carriers already play a crucial role in identifying Undeliverable as Addressed (UAA) addresses during their daily route activities. These UAAs are provided to the Census Bureau and are instrumental in controlling the enumeration universe. Having Postal Service city letter carriers also act as enumerators would be another opportunity to leverage and extend both their existing activities and knowledge of the communities that they serve.

The potential long-term advantages to the Census Bureau include: (1) leveraging local knowledge about addressing and households, (2) leveraging the existing USPS workforce rather than recruiting and onboarding temporary census enumerators, and (3) providing a more flexible landscape for how and when Nonresponse Followup (NRFU) interviews occur with a wider pool of enumerators working different hours.

1.1. Scope

The scope of the pilot was to test the feasibility of, and assess the factors and processes involved in, implementing the use of Postal Service city letter carriers as Census Bureau enumerators, in their capacity as USPS employees. The pilot was planned to be implemented in the following two ZIP Codes outside of, but adjacent to, the 2018 End-to-End Census Test site location in Providence County, RI: 02769 (N. Attleboro, MA) and 02888 (Warwick, RI).

The pilot planned to involve approximately 40 volunteer Postal Service city letter carriers and proposed to also include the participation of 8-10 postal supervisors operating out of a minimum of two post offices, one in each ZIP Code. These parameters were chosen based on operational considerations such as population size and number of housing units, postal considerations such as workforce availability, and estimated cost and schedule.

The proposed evaluation and deliverable for this pilot was a report that would detail:

- 1) Specifics of Postal Service city letter carrier assignments and completion of work—Percentages of assigned vs. resolved cases to determine whether Postal Service city letter carriers were able to successfully conduct NRFU activities. This documentation was planned to identify and describe challenges and opportunities for future collaborative participation in this operation.
- 2) Baseline metrics to describe costs and benefits of a collaborative operation—An assessment of the recruiting and onboarding cost savings by using existing USPS employees to determine if there was value added in terms of efficiency and quality of NRFU activities. The assessment’s success for the Census Bureau was to be measured by the successful and timely completion of cases assigned by the Census Bureau to Postal Service city letter carriers with local knowledge.
- 3) Results of focus group debriefings held with the Postal Service city letter carriers, their managers, and the public—Descriptions of completed enumeration assignments to describe and characterize the impacts of this collaboration on agency operations and further anecdotal reporting that might point to insight around impacts on public trust and trust-message branding as a result of having uniformed Postal Service city letter carriers conduct Census Bureau operations.
- 4) Documented lessons learned and recommendations—The outcome of this test would have provided the Census Bureau and the USPS with baseline descriptive and qualitative information that could be used to inform future field-based collaborations, such as a scaled-up quantitative pilot and future decennial census collaborative enumeration activities.

2. Background

The USPS-Census Bureau partnership was formally established under the Geography Division in the fall of 2016 to achieve the goal of being a “one stop shop” for coordinating and documenting the various activities jointly conducted between the two organizations. An objective of the partnership is to “[a]chieve collaborative value by working together across all lines of shared business at the enterprise level.” The idea of using Postal Service letter carriers to conduct enumeration as part of decennial census operations has been proposed or suggested numerous

times in recent years by members of Congress, as well as other advisory and oversight bodies including in the October 12, 2017, House Oversight and Government Reform Committee hearing with Department of Commerce Secretary Wilbur Ross (Exhibit A). These recommendations are cited as responses to the rising operational costs of both agencies and the need for accurate address data. The Census Bureau's use of letter carriers as enumerators during the 2018 End-to-End Census Test was an opportunity to test the stated objective of achieving collaborative value. The hypothesis was that, from a Census Bureau perspective, the use of Postal Service city letter carriers as Census Bureau enumerators would increase local knowledge applied to the NRFU operation and expand the Census Bureau's pool of enumeration resources without having to recruit and onboard as many temporary Census employees; and from a USPS perspective, it would be a potential source of revenue.

2.1. Approach

A critical element of the USPS-Census Bureau partnership is a set of interagency working groups focusing on specific topics between the two organizations, serving as subject-matter experts when needed, and working collaboratively on pilot programs. The Postal Service City Letter Carriers as Census Bureau Enumerators pilot was heavily influenced by these working groups, and the Census Bureau and USPS worked together extensively to model the feasibility of the pilot. The work that was conducted in support of modeling the pilot largely took place in the Optimizing Self-Response, Modeling, Field/Human Resources, and Partnerships working groups. To see a full chart reflecting the organizational structure of the workings groups, refer to Exhibit B. Each of these working groups contributed knowledge, time, and effort into the design and future implementation of the Postal Service City Letter Carriers as Census Bureau Enumerators pilot.

The Human Resources working group contributed to the understanding of the compliance forms and documentation that would be required for the pilot. It also determined the most effective way for the employees to be compensated and provided extensive feedback on the preliminary Interagency Agreement (IAA) that was drafted to govern the pilot. This group held a crucial role in developing a shared understanding of what would be required from each agency in regard to raising labor-union awareness and addressing overtime concerns. The Human Resources working group also played a fundamental role in achieving support from the National Association of Letter Carriers (NALC) and the National Rural Letter Carriers' Association (NRLCA) in order to progress with the Pilot. The group used a combination of USPS law-department, labor-relations, and human-resources employees to coordinate meetings with the USPS labor unions to determine if there would be any anticipated issues with the pilot.

The Human Resources working group was eventually combined with the Field working group, which contained subject-matter experts from the Census Bureau's Field Division.

They were responsible for providing guidance regarding required enumerator training, NRFU operations, and the software used for case assignment. They helped facilitate learning sessions with USPS on topics related to the MOJO Optimizer, which is the tool that the Census Bureau uses to assign cases to enumerators. This facilitated session allowed for both parties to understand the role that the optimizer could have in the pilot. The Field Division was able to provide some information about the mode and length of the training Postal Service city letter carriers would need to take, the training topics that would be covered, and the method for their training to be delivered. Training locations had not been determined, and virtual training options were also being considered. This combined working group played an important role in understanding and establishing properly trained staff, as well as planning for compliance during execution.

The Partnership working group was responsible for the overarching internal and external communication of the pilot. This working group assisted in identifying the stakeholders that needed to be contacted and the most effective methods of communication. This group also coordinated across the two agencies to ensure that executives at each level were aware of the pilot and utilized the opportunity to advance the partnership forward. A communications plan was started but halted with the cancellation of the pilot.

The Modeling working group supported the logistics planning for the pilot, including identifying success key-performance indicators, suggesting workloads, and rural route definition. This group facilitated the day-to-day planning of how the pilot would be implemented, including the details of how the Postal Service city letter carriers would receive their assignments and the implications that this would have on each agency.

The objective of the pilot was to have the Postal Service city letter carriers conduct enumeration in the same way that NRFU would be conducted within the 2018 End-to-End Census Test site. In order to ensure that NRFU would not be disrupted by the pilot and recognizing that Postal Service city letter carriers would not be Census Bureau employees, weekly IT system meetings were held to confirm the requirements needed to have 2018 End-to-End Census Test systems ready to support the pilot.

The Census Bureau created and submitted an Initial Business Plan (IBP) and a Detailed Business Plan (DBP) for the pilot that were approved by the 2020 Census Portfolio Management Governance Board. These documents can be found on the USPS Census Bureau Partnership Coordination SharePoint site. The Census Bureau published a 30-day Federal Register Notice (FRN) informing the public of the creation and implementation of the pilot (see Exhibit C), which generated 12 sets of comments. An additional FRN was published on March 22, 2018, to notify the public of the cancellation of the pilot (Exhibit D).

The Census Bureau and USPS produced a Letter of Intent (LOI) and a draft IAA as formal documentation in support of the pilot. The LOI was completed and signed by both parties and supported a strategic alliance between the agencies. The draft IAA for the pilot received extensive review and feedback from stakeholders and was circulated for legal review. The pilot IAA was never finalized or signed and did not go through the Census Bureau's formal approval process given the timing of the cancellation.

3. Outcome

When the pilot IAA was submitted for legal review, it was discovered that there were irreconcilable conflicts between the required handling of certain administrative processes within the two agencies.

In a letter dated March 23, 2018, from Commerce Secretary Ross to The Honorable Stephen Lynch of the House Committee on Oversight and Government Reform, the Census Bureau's position is stated as follows:

"In order to participate in the collection of data under Title 13, an individual must be either a Census Bureau employee or a temporary employee with Special Sworn Status (SSS). Specifically, 13 U.S.C. 23(c) states:

The Secretary may utilize temporary staff, including employees of Federal, State, or local agencies or instrumentalities or employees of private organizations to assist the Bureau in performing the work authorized by this title, but only if such temporary staff is sworn to observe the limitations imposed by Section 9 of this title. (Emphasis added).

Therefore, the Census Bureau can only engage Postal Service City Letter Carriers to assist the Census Bureau in conducting the End-to-End test authorized by Title 13 if those Postal Service City Letter Carriers obtain SSS pursuant to 13 U.S.C. To do so, the Postal Service City Letter Carriers must take an oath of nondisclosure to protect the information they collect and to comply with the requirements set forth in Title 13.

See a copy of the full letter in Exhibit E.

A change of law or similar measure was suggested by Rep. Lynch, but the Census Bureau concluded in the same response letter from Secretary Ross that "any legislative change purporting to carve out an exception to the Title 13 confidentiality requirements for Postal Service City Letter Carriers would be impractical and could negatively impact public cooperation with the 2018 Census Test and the Census Bureau. However, if the USPS is interested in modifying its own policies and procedures to allow participating Postal Service City

Letter Carriers to comply with Title 13, the Census Bureau is committing to work with USPS and Congress to establish a partnership in future Decennial Censuses.”

4. Recommendations

All pilot activities were discontinued based on the irreconcilable conflicts of the requirements of 13 U.S.C. (Census) and 18 and 39 U.S.C. (USPS) and the regulations enacted pursuant to those titles. The Census Bureau and USPS should work together to either exempt USPS employees acting on behalf of the Census Bureau from certain confidentiality requirements of Title 13 through a legislative change, encourage the Census Bureau to independently engage USPS employees to perform enumeration functions as Census Bureau employees, or pursue other joint initiatives unrelated to enumeration that will continue the efficiencies and innovative discovery made possible by this partnership activity.

Exhibit A: Relevant Pages from the Official Transcript of the House Oversight and Government Reform Committee hearing with Department of Commerce Secretary, Wilbur Ross

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that just makes economic sense. Rather than trying—this government attitude of we have got to do everything ourselves, especially in IT where I think the government really struggles—we are damned by some of our own contracting laws on that—it just seems like this is a great opportunity to look for some cost savings.

And, you know, it is something that I brought up to your predecessor several years ago, but apparently it fell on deaf ears. So I

Secretary ROSS. Well, we do believe that the cost will come in below the inflation-adjusted cost of the 2010 census, notwithstanding that there are the overruns. My predecessors estimated that the inflation-adjusted cost of 2020 using the 2010 methodology would have been \$17.5 billion, so we are way more than \$1 billion below that with all the problems that have occurred.

Second, in terms of using existing databases, we do what we can. For example, we are making a lot of use of administrative records, the postal system records, local—the IRS records, Social Security records to check IDs, things of that sort. But the truth is Americans are a very mobile population. Something like 12 percent relocate each year.

Mr. FARENTHOLD. And I do—I am running out of time. I do want to make one more comment. I do think the Postal Service is an unused government resource that could be more help to the census than I think they are currently using. You have got Postal Service employees that visit almost every American residence five, six times a week, so I think there is a great resource there that may be underutilized.

My time is expired, but if you would like to comment further, I am sure the chairman would —

Secretary ROSS. We are. We're using the Postal Service and, as I say, the IRS, Social Security, Medicaid, Medicare records, the Indian Health Service, every database that we can imagine because we really are trying to make sure we count everyone and that we count everyone one time.

Chairman GOWDY. The gentleman from Texas —

Mr. FARENTHOLD. Thank you, sir. I yield back.

Chairman GOWDY. The gentleman from Texas yields back.

The gentleman from Missouri, Mr. Clay, is recognized.

Mr. CLAY. Thank you, Chairman Gowdy.

And also, thank you, Secretary Ross,—on the top—for your testimony today.

Secretary ROSS. Sorry. I don't know the geography of the committee well enough —

Mr. CLAY. I understand.

Secretary ROSS.—where everybody is sitting.

Mr. CLAY. I understand. And really, the census is about three things: money, information, and power. And no community or State wins if we fail to get this right. And our nation will be the ultimate loser.

And as you all know, our country is more mobile, as you said, and much more diverse than ever before. And sadly, in some parts of our nation, residents have a high level of distrust for the Federal Government, which makes them less inclined to take part in the census. That is true in urban communities like the one that I rep-

even more mobility than there is, say, in a single-family home in a little town. So it's very, very complicated, but we do begin with the postal system records for sure.

Mr. BLUM. So you use their database. Can we also utilize the man knocking on the door?

Secretary ROSS. The man knocking on the door —

Mr. BLUM. Can we utilize the postal carrier for that?

Secretary ROSS. The man knocking on the door is the last resort, only when all the more efficient mechanisms have already been used.

Mr. BLUM. I got looking at the \$15.6 billion and I thought, Mr. Secretary, if you and I formed a company, I am guessing we could do for \$8 billion, save the government \$7 billion, and you and I would put a few dollars in our pocket I am guessing. Is there any truth to that?

Secretary ROSS. Well, I don't know. We are where we are, and we do think under the circumstances we really need the \$15.6 billion. Thank you very much. Thanks for being here, Mr. Secretary. I yield back my time, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman GOWDY. The gentleman from Iowa yields back.

The gentleman from Pennsylvania is recognized.

Mr. CARTWRIGHT. Thank you, Mr. Chairman. And, Chairman Gowdy, I want to express my appreciation for this hearing.

People don't think about the census that much, but it is such an important thing, not just because it is constitutionally mandated that we need to get it right. We need to get it right so our American Federal Government can work better for everybody. We need an accurate census. We need to know where the people are, we need to know where the jobs are, we need to know where the poverty is, we need to know how the economy is changing, we need to know what the government needs to do and maybe needs to stop doing and where these things need to happen. So, so much of policy depends on an accurate census. We need to get it right.

Secretary Ross, it is good to see you again. I saw you in May when you came and testified before the House Appropriations Committee. And I want to touch on some areas that we do have concerns about. I think all of us in this room share the concern we need to get this census right. We want to learn from past mistakes. We don't want to be—we don't want to have rose-colored glasses and really unjustified hopes. We need to be very practical and pragmatic about this, and I think you are that kind of person, Secretary Ross, so I want to touch on a few things.

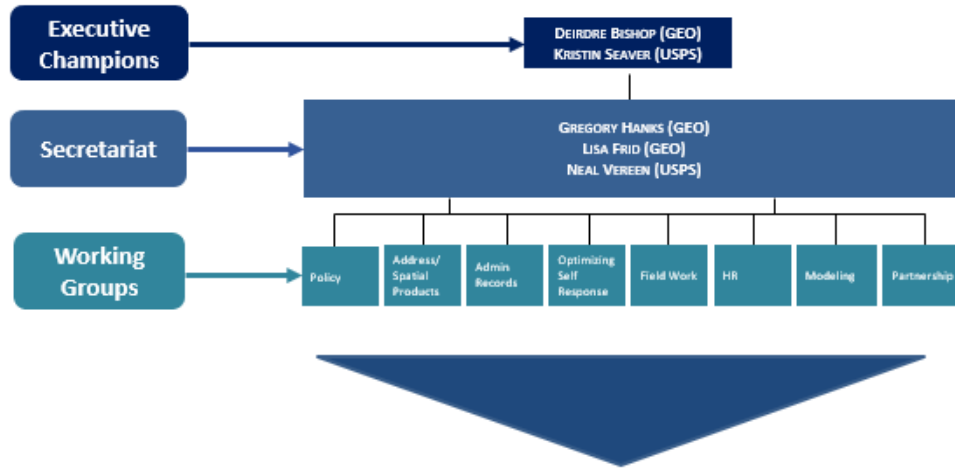
First, warning signs of trouble, I mean, May 3 was when Census Director Thompson appeared before my subcommittee on appropriations, and we asked him hard questions, much like the ones you are getting here today, Secretary Ross. And he resigned the next week. That is a warning sign of trouble to me. And he hasn't been replaced.

First question, are there immediate plans to replace the census director?

Secretary ROSS. Yes. We had actually come up with a nominee and then that fell away during the vetting process, so we're actively trying to recruit. But I have very good confidence in the team that we have assembled right now, namely, the two people who col-

Exhibit B: Partnerships Working Groups – Organizational Chart

FY 17-18 ORGANIZATIONAL CHART



FY 19 ORGANIZATIONAL CHART

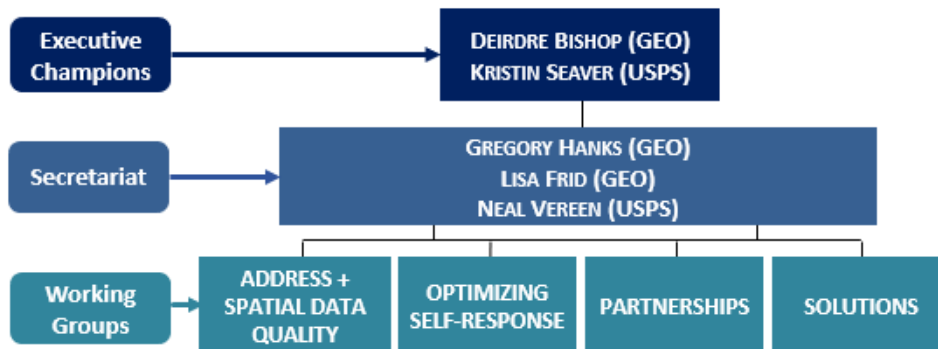


Exhibit C: Pilot of USPS Letter Carriers as Census Enumerators during the 2018 End-to-End Census Test



43934

Federal Register / Vol. 82, No. 181 / Wednesday, September 20, 2017 / Notices

begin at approximately 8:30 a.m. and end at approximately 2:00 p.m.

ADDRESSES: The meeting will be held at the U.S. Census Bureau Auditorium, 4600 Silver Hill Road, Suitland, Maryland 20746.

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT: Tara Dunlop Jackson, Branch Chief for Advisory Committees, Customer Liaison and Marketing Services Office, at tara.dunlop.jackson@census.gov, Department of Commerce, U.S. Census Bureau, Room 8H177, 4600 Silver Hill Road, Washington, DC 20233, telephone 301-763-5222. For TTY callers, please use the Federal Relay Service 1-800-877-8339.

SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION: The NAC was established in March 2012 and operates in accordance with the Federal Advisory Committee Act (Title 5, United States Code, Appendix 2, Section 10). The NAC members are appointed by the Director, U.S. Census Bureau, and consider topics such as hard to reach populations, race and ethnicity, language, aging populations, American Indian and Alaska Native tribal considerations, new immigrant populations, populations affected by natural disasters, highly mobile and migrant populations, complex households, rural populations, and population segments with limited access to technology. The Committee also advises on data privacy and confidentiality, among other issues.

All meetings are open to the public. A brief period will be set aside at the meeting for public comment on Friday, November 3. However, individuals with extensive questions or statements must submit them in writing to: census.national.advisory.committee@census.gov (subject line "November 2017 NAC Meeting Public Comment"), or by letter submission to Kimberly L. Leonard, Committee Liaison Officer, Department of Commerce, U.S. Census Bureau, Room 8H179, 4600 Silver Hill Road, Washington, DC 20233.

If you plan to attend the meeting, please register by Monday, October 30, 2017. You may access the online registration from the following link: https://www.regonline.com/nac_meeting_nov2017. Seating is available to the public on a first-come, first-served basis.

This meeting is physically accessible to people with disabilities. Requests for sign language interpretation or other auxiliary aids should also be directed to the Committee Liaison Officer as soon as known, and preferably two weeks prior to the meeting.

Please call 301-763-9906 upon arrival at the Census Bureau on the day

of the meeting. A photo ID must be presented in order to receive your visitor's badge. Visitors are not allowed beyond the first floor.

Dated: September 14, 2017.

Ron S. Jarmin,
Associate Director for Economic Programs, performing the non-exclusive functions and duties of the Director, Bureau of the Census.
[FR Doc. 2017-20061 Filed 9-19-17; 8:45 am]

BILLING CODE 3510-07-P

DEPARTMENT OF COMMERCE

Census Bureau

Proposed Information Collection; Comment Request; Pilot of USPS Postal Carriers as Census Enumerators During the 2018 End-to-End Census Test

AGENCY: U.S. Census Bureau, Commerce.

ACTION: Notice.

SUMMARY: The Department of Commerce, as part of its continuing effort to reduce paperwork and respondent burden, invites the general public and other Federal agencies to take this opportunity to comment on proposed and/or continuing information collections, as required by the Paperwork Reduction Act of 1995.

DATES: To ensure consideration, written comments must be submitted on or before November 20, 2017.

ADDRESSES: Direct all written comments to Jennifer Jessup, Departmental Paperwork Clearance Officer, Department of Commerce, Room 6616, 14th and Constitution Avenue NW., Washington, DC 20230 (or via the Internet at PRAComments@doc.gov).

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT: Requests for additional information or copies of the information collection instrument(s) and instructions should be directed to Robin A. Pennington, U.S. Census Bureau, 4600 Silver Hill Road, Washington, DC 20233 (or via the internet at robin.a.pennington@census.gov).

SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION:

I. Abstract

The U.S. Census Bureau proposes a proof of concept study on the use of United States Postal Service (USPS) Postal Carriers as Census Bureau enumerators as part of the 2018 End-to-End Census Test. The possibility of formally using Postal Carriers to conduct enumeration as part of Decennial Census operations has been proposed or suggested several times in

recent years by Members of Congress, as well as other advisory and oversight bodies, in response to (1) the rising operational costs of both agencies, and (2) the need for familiarity with local addresses. The suggestions often note that the USPS maintains a permanent, well trained, and experienced labor force that possesses significant public trust and detailed knowledge of the addressing and residential patterns in communities they serve.

The rationale for this study is to test and observe the feasibility of the use of Postal Carriers as enumerators in the context of an existing Census Test, and, thereby, enable the Census Bureau and USPS to better respond to stakeholder inquiries about the feasibility of such activities. The potential long-term advantages to the Census Bureau include: (1) Leveraging local USPS knowledge about households to pinpoint the best time for an interview, (2) increasing the pool of enumerators without hiring new temporary staff, and (3) providing a more flexible landscape for how and when Nonresponse Followup (NRFU) interviews occur during the enumeration phase of a census.

The Census Bureau plans to conduct a pilot in two ZIP Codes outside of—but adjacent to—the 2018 End-to-End Census Test site location in Providence County, R.I. The pilot will involve approximately 40 Postal Carriers operating out of two ZIP Codes, 02760 located in North Attleboro, MA, and 02888 located in Warwick, RI.

The proposed evaluation and deliverables are:

- (1) The numbers of resolved enumeration cases will be documented to determine whether Postal Carriers were able to successfully conduct assigned NRFU activities. Documentation will identify and describe challenges and opportunities for future collaborative participation in this operation.
- (2) A report that details the development of baseline metrics to describe costs and benefits of a future collaborative operation. This study will determine the information needed to assess cost differences/savings to recruiting and staff-onboarding operations by using existing USPS employees, and the value added in terms of efficiency and quality of NRFU activities, measured by numbers of visits, of using Postal Carriers with local knowledge.
- (3) Results of focus group debriefings held with the Postal Carriers, their managers, and the public after the 2018 End-to-End Census Test enumeration phase is complete to describe and

characterize the impacts of this collaboration on agency operations and the public trust.

Documented operational Lessons Learned from the entirety of the project and recommendations for next steps will accompany the report. The outcome of this pilot study will provide the Census Bureau and the USPS with baseline descriptive and qualitative information that can be used to inform future field-based collaborations.

II. Method of Collection

Census Bureau staff will train Postal Carriers to successfully conduct enumeration to complete the activity. Postal Carriers will be sworn to uphold the same confidentiality as Census Bureau employees. They will perform enumeration functions using the same procedures and automation as other enumerators during the hours of 5 p.m.–8 p.m. on weekdays, variable weekend hours, and both inside and outside the geographic constraints of their assigned routes.

III. Data

OMB Control Number: 0607–XXXX.
Form Number(s): DH–16(LN), DH–16(LN)(E/S).

Type of Review: Regular submission.
Affected Public: 31,479.

Estimated Number of Respondents: 24,889.

Estimated Time per Response: 10 minutes.

Estimated Total Annual Burden Hours: 4,148.

Estimated Total Annual Cost to Public: \$199,080.

Respondent's Obligation: Mandatory.
Legal Authority: Title 13 U.S.C. 23, 141, 193.

IV. Request for Comments

Comments are invited on: (a) Whether the proposed collection of information is necessary for the proper performance of the functions of the agency, including whether the information shall have practical utility; (b) the accuracy of the agency's estimate of the burden (including hours and cost) of the proposed collection of information; (c) ways to enhance the quality, utility, and clarity of the information to be collected; and (d) ways to minimize the burden of the collection of information on respondents, including through the use of automated collection techniques or other forms of information technology.

Comments submitted in response to this notice will be summarized and/or included in the request for OMB approval of this information collection;

they also will become a matter of public record.

Sheleen Dumas,

Departmental PRA Lead, Office of the Chief Information Officer.

[FR Doc. 2017–20036 Filed 9–19–17; 8:45 am]

BILLING CODE 3510–07–P

DEPARTMENT OF COMMERCE

Census Bureau

Proposed Information Collection; Comment Request: Survey of Housing Starts, Sales, and Completions

AGENCY: U.S. Census Bureau, Commerce.

ACTION: Notice.

SUMMARY: The Department of Commerce, as part of its continuing effort to reduce paperwork and respondent burden, invites the general public and other Federal agencies to take this opportunity to comment on proposed and/or continuing information collections, as required by the Paperwork Reduction Act of 1995, Public Law 104–13.

DATES: To ensure consideration, written comments must be submitted on or before November 20, 2017.

ADDRESSES: Direct all written comments to Jennifer Jessup, Departmental Paperwork Clearance Officer, Department of Commerce, Room 6616, 14th and Constitution Avenue NW., Washington, DC 20230 (or via the Internet at PRAcomments@doc.gov).

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT: Requests for additional information or copies of the information collection instrument(s) and instructions should be directed to Erica Filipek, U.S. Census Bureau, EID, CENHQ Room 7K057, 4600 Silver Hill Road, Washington, DC 20233, telephone (301)763–5161 (or via the Internet at Erica.Mary.Filipek@census.gov).

SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION

I. Abstract

The U.S. Census Bureau plans to request a three-year extension of the current Office of Management and Budget (OMB) clearance of the Survey of Housing Starts, Sales and Completions, also known as the Survey of Construction (SOC). We also plan revisions to the current collection. The SOC collects monthly data on new residential construction from a sample of owners or builders. The Census Bureau uses the Computer-Assisted Personal Interviewing (CAPI) electronic questionnaires SOC–QI/SF.1 and SOC–

QI/MF.1 to collect data on start and completion dates of construction, physical characteristics of the structure (floor area, number of bathrooms, type of heating system, etc.), and if applicable, date of sale, sales price, and type of financing. The SOC provides widely used measures of construction activity, including the economic indicators Housing Starts and Housing Completions, which are from the New Residential Construction series, and New Residential Sales.

After working with the survey sponsor and key data users, the Census Bureau has decided to add one new data item to the single-family questionnaire regarding ceiling height.

With respect to survey burden, the Census Bureau samples about 1,620 new buildings each month (19,440 per year). Census Bureau staff inquire about the progress of each building multiple times until it is completed (and a sales contract is signed, if it is a single-family house that is built for sale). For single-family buildings, there are an average of 8.11 interviews and for multifamily buildings, an average of 7.0 interviews. The total number of interviews conducted each year for single-family buildings is about 102,186 and for multifamily buildings is about 47,880. Each interview takes 5 minutes on average. Therefore, the total annual burden is 12,506 hours.

II. Method of Collection

The Census Bureau uses its field representatives to collect the data through CAPI.

III. Data

OMB Control Number: 0607–0110.
Form Number(s): SOC–QI/SF.1 and SOC–QI/MF.1.

Type of Review: Regular submission.
Affected Public: Individuals or households, business or other for-profit.

Estimated Number of Respondents: 19,440.

Estimated Time per Response: 5 minutes.

Estimated Total Annual Burden Hours: 12,506.

Estimated Total Annual Cost to Public: \$0.

Respondent's Obligation: Voluntary.
Legal Authority: Title 13 U.S.C. 131 and 182.

IV. Request for Comments

Comments are invited on: (a) Whether the proposed collection of information is necessary for the proper performance of the functions of the agency, including whether the information shall have practical utility; (b) the accuracy of the agency's estimate of the burden

Exhibit D: Notice of Correction to Federal Register Notice for the proposed Pilot of USPS Letter Carriers as Census Enumerators during the 2018 End-to-End Census Test

Federal Register / Vol. 83, No. 56 / Thursday, March 22, 2018 / Notices		12561
<p>(TDD) may call the Federal Information Relay Service (FIRS) at 1-800-877-8339 between 8:00 a.m. and 8:00 p.m., Eastern Standard Time, Monday through Friday.</p> <p>SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION: The purpose of the meeting is to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. Review the following fee proposals: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. Regional fee consistency approach; b. Monongahela National Forest fee proposals which include the Hopkins Cabin; c. Wayne National Forest fee proposals reducing trail permit fees for off-highway vehicle (OHV) users and eliminating fees for horse and mountain bike users; d. Hiawatha National Forest fee proposals for Grand Island; e. Chequamegon-Nicolet National Forest fee proposals including new fees at day use sites and one cabin rental, and fee increases for overnight sites; and f. Green Mountain Finger Lakes National Forest fee proposals including new fee at Silver Lake Campgrounds, Texas Falls Day Use Area Pavilion, Grout Pond Campground, Backbone Horse Camp and Potomac Group Camp and Pavilion and fee increases at Chittenden Brook, Moosalamoo Campground, Hapgood Pond Campground, Hapgood Pond Day Use, Hapgood Pond Group Picnic sites, and Blueberry Patch Recreation Area. <p>Details on all fee proposals can be found by visiting the website in the SUMMARY section.</p> <p>The meeting is open to the public. The agenda will include time for people to make oral statements of three minutes. Individuals wishing to make an oral statement should request in writing by April 9, 2018, to be scheduled on the agenda. Anyone who would like to bring related matters to the attention of the Recreation RAC may file written statements with the Committee's staff before or after the meeting. Written comments and time requests for time to make oral comments must be sent to Joanna Wilson, Eastern Region Recreation RAC Coordinator, 855 South Skylake Drive, Woodland Hills, Utah 84653; or by email to jwilson08@fs.fed.us.</p> <p>Meeting Accommodations: If you are a person requiring reasonable accommodation, please make requests in advance for sign language interpreting, assistive listening devices, or other reasonable accommodation for access to the facility or proceedings by contacting the person listed in the section titled FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT. All reasonable accommodation requests are managed on a case-by case basis.</p>		
<p>Dated: March 6, 2018.</p> <p>Chris French, <i>Associate Deputy Chief, National Forest System.</i> [FR Doc. 2018-05773 Filed 3-21-18; 8:45 am] BILLING CODE 3411-15-P</p>		
<p>DEPARTMENT OF COMMERCE</p> <p>U.S. Census Bureau</p> <p>Notice of Correction to Federal Register Notice for Pilot of USPS Postal Carriers as Census Enumerators During 2018 End-to-End Census Test</p> <p>AGENCY: U.S. Census Bureau, Commerce. ACTION: Notice of correction.</p> <p>SUMMARY: On September 20, 2017, the Census Bureau published a notice, <i>Federal Register</i> Document 2017-20036 (<i>Federal Register</i> Volume 82, Number 181, Pages 43934-43935), proposing to conduct a proof of concept study on the use of the United States Postal Service (USPS) Postal Carriers as Census Enumerators in conjunction with the 2018 End-to-End Census Test—Peak Operations. This notice corrects <i>Federal Register</i> Document 2017-20036 to cancel this collection after the <i>Federal Register</i> Notice was published for public comment.</p> <p>SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION: The Census Bureau cancelled the proof of concept study after determining during discussions with USPS that postal carriers had certain disclosure obligations that made it impossible for them to comply with the strict legal confidentiality requirements under Title 13 governing Census data.</p> <p>The Census Bureau received a total of twelve sets of comments on the initial <i>Federal Register</i> Notice posting, none of which were dispositive. Two sets of comments requested more information or materials about who would be performing enumeration in special situations, including deployed military and others living outside the country at the time of enumeration. The Census Bureau has special operations and procedures for enumeration of people in these situations, and the proposal for use of USPS Postal Carriers as Census Enumerators did not extend to special operations.</p> <p>Three sets of comments generally expressed support for conducting the pilot. One commenter noted that mail carriers know their area of delivery and the people who live there, also expressing a general concern for the safety of those performing enumeration activities. Another commenter suggested that part-time carriers would be better as enumerators than full-time carriers due to schedule flexibility and hourly wages, as well as knowledge of more than one carrier route. The third commenter thought the idea was potentially good, but that care would be required in a nationwide implementation and that results from the pilot test would be important.</p> <p>Seven sets of comments expressed concerns about using Postal Carriers to conduct enumeration activities. These comments generally noted that Postal Carriers already work full-time jobs, that Postal Carriers' familiarity with addresses does not necessarily translate into knowledge of the people living at those addresses, and that using Postal Carriers instead of Census employees would not be economically expedient. The latter comment also referenced a Government Accountability Office report that studied the use of Postal Carriers to conduct enumeration activities. Other commenters stated that Postal Carriers and Enumerators require different skill sets to perform in their respective positions and that using Postal Carriers for enumeration could endanger the public perception of Postal Carriers. Yet other comments stated that the test site was not representative of the communities that typically do not self-respond, that the relationship between Postal Carriers and their customers could affect the quality and completeness of data collected, and that enumerating a housing unit could alter the long-term relationship between Postal Carriers and the residents of that housing unit.</p> <p>Sheleen Dumas, <i>Departmental Lead PRA Officer, Office of the Chief Information Officer.</i> [FR Doc. 2018-05874 Filed 3-21-18; 8:45 am] BILLING CODE 3510-07-P</p>		
<p>DEPARTMENT OF COMMERCE</p> <p>U.S. Census Bureau</p> <p>Proposed Information Collection; Comment Request; Service Annual Survey</p> <p>AGENCY: U.S. Census Bureau, Commerce. ACTION: Notice.</p> <p>SUMMARY: The Department of Commerce, as part of its continuing effort to reduce paperwork and respondent burden, invites the general public and other Federal agencies to take this opportunity to comment on proposed and/or continuing information</p>		

Exhibit E: Letter from Commerce Secretary Wilbur Ross to the Honorable Stephen Lynch, Chairman, House Committee on Oversight and Government Reform



UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF COMMERCE
The Secretary of Commerce
 Washington, D.C. 20230

March 23, 2018

The Honorable Stephen F. Lynch
 U.S. House of Representatives
 Washington, DC 20515

Dear Representative Lynch:

Thank you for your letter requesting information about the legal requirements affecting a proposed pilot program between the Census Bureau and the United States Postal Service (USPS) to explore the use of postal carriers to serve as census enumerators. Responses to both of your inquiries are set forth below:

5. A detailed explanation of the legal impediments to inclusion of the pilot program in the 2018 End-to-End Census Test.

The Census Bureau is conducting the 2018 End-to-End Census Test under the authority of 13 U.S.C. §§ 141 and 193. These provisions authorize the Census Bureau to conduct the Decennial Census and to conduct surveys either before, after, or during the Decennial Census to aid in the initiation, taking, or completion of the Decennial Census.

Title 13, United States Code (Title 13) requires the Census Bureau to keep confidential all information collected from or on behalf of respondents. Specifically, 13 U.S.C. § 8(b) provides that the Secretary may only release statistical materials which "do not disclose the information reported by or on behalf of any particular respondent." Under 13 U.S.C. § 9, no official or employee of the Department of Commerce may: (1) use the information furnished under the provision of Title 13 for any purpose other than the statistical purposes for which it is supplied; (2) make any publication whereby the data furnished by any particular establishment or individual under this title can be identified; or (3) permit anyone other than the sworn officers or employees of the Department or (or its bureaus and agencies) to examine the individual reports. Section 9 further states that census information is immune from legal process. 13 U.S.C. § 9(a). Finally, Title 13 provides that the information collected may not be used to the detriment of any respondent or other person to whom such information relates, except in the prosecution of alleged violations of Title 13. 13 U.S.C. § 8(c).

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In *Baldrige v. Shapiro*,²⁹ the United States Supreme Court directly addressed the confidentiality provisions of Title 13. The Court held that respondent names and addresses, from whatever source obtained or compiled, are part of the raw census data intended by Congress to be protected from disclosure under Title 13.³⁰ The Court also found that information not commonly considered to be traditional “responses,” such as vacancy status, are also confidential.³¹ The Court also held that the Census Bureau has no discretion to decide whether to disclose confidential data.³² Rather, data becomes confidential at collection by operation of law.³³ If the Census Bureau acquires information from or on behalf of a respondent and makes that information available to an individual that is not sworn to uphold the confidentiality provisions of Title 13, such as a U.S. Postal worker, then that release is a wrongful disclosure under 13 U.S.C. § 214. Violations of 13 U.S.C. § 214 are punishable by criminal fine and imprisonment.

In order to participate in the collection of data under Title 13, an individual must be either a Census Bureau employee or a temporary employee with Special Sworn Status (SSS). Specifically, 13 U.S.C. § 23(c) states:

The Secretary may utilize temporary staff, including employees of Federal, State, or local agencies or instrumentalities or employees of private organizations to assist the Bureau in performing the work authorized by this title, *but only if such temporary staff is sworn to observe the limitations imposed by section 9 of this title.* (Emphasis added).

Therefore, the Census Bureau can only engage postal carriers to assist the Census Bureau in conducting the End-to End test authorized by Title 13 if those postal carriers obtain SSS pursuant to 13 U.S.C. § 23(c). To do so, the postal carriers must take an oath of nondisclosure to protect the information they collect and to comply with the requirements set forth in Title 13.

While USPS did not object to the concept of participating postal carriers obtaining SSS, it became clear during the course of the Census Bureau’s discussions with USPS that its carriers would be unable to comply with that oath. USPS advised that participating postal carriers would remain USPS employees and therefore be required to comply with all USPS policies, even when the carriers were conducting enumeration activities for the Secretary of Commerce under Title 13. We understand that these USPS policies, which may be incorporated into USPS collective bargaining agreements, would require postal carriers to disclose name, address, and other information about census respondents in instances and for purposes determined by USPS, including law enforcement. These uses would be non-statistical and would advance activities

²⁹ 455 U.S. 345 (1982).

³⁰ *Id.* at 355.

³¹ *Id.* at 349.

³² *Id.* at 355.

³³ 13 U.S.C. § 9.

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unrelated to Title 13 and would therefore violate Title 13. The Department defers to USPS to provide any additional information about the specific policies at issue.

6. An explanation of what changes in law or otherwise would allow the pilot program's inclusion in the 2018 test.

Any legislative change purporting to carve out an exception to the Title 13 confidentiality requirements for postal carriers would be impractical and could negatively impact public cooperation with the 2018 Census Test and the Census Bureau. Any such legislative change would diminish the confidentiality protections provided by Title 13 that are essential to the Census Bureau's ability to conduct a complete and accurate census.

Beginning in the 1880s, under the direction of the Superintendent of the Census and continuing under Presidential Proclamation, oaths required by Census Acts, and eventual codification in Title 13, census employees have been required to preserve the confidentiality of respondent information. Maintaining this confidentiality is not only required by law, but fundamental to preserving the sanctioned statistical use of the data and to protecting the interests of the individual furnishing information against unwarranted intrusion or an adverse determination of rights. In *Baldrige*, the Supreme Court recognized that Congress, through the confidentiality provisions of Title 13, has provided strong assurances that information furnished to the Census Bureau by individuals is to be treated as confidential in order to ensure the public cooperation necessary to obtain an accurate census count.³⁴ The Court recognized that Congress understood the value of the public cooperation engendered by these assurances, despite having broad congressional authority to require response.³⁵

Legal requirements, including the Paperwork Reduction Act, require the Census Bureau to provide notice to respondents regarding the protection and handling of their information. If Congress diminished the protections of Title 13 in any way, even if only to accommodate participating postal carriers, the Census Bureau would be required to inform respondents that participating postal carriers would not be obligated to maintain the confidentiality of their information.

Allowing disclosure of confidential information at the discretion of postal carriers without accountability to the Secretary would complicate the efficient management of the census and the Census Bureau's stewardship of confidential data. Respondents would be forced to choose between fulfilling the legal obligation to respond to the Decennial Census and cooperating through an enumerating postal employee who would not be legally required to maintain confidentiality or privacy. Requiring respondents to choose between confidentiality

³⁴ 455 U.S. at 354.

³⁵ *Ibid.*

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and cooperation would be inconsistent with the Congressional values and intents captured in Title 13.

If USPS is interested in modifying its own policies and procedures to allow participating carriers to comply with Title 13, the Census Bureau is committing to working with USPS and Congress to establish a partnership in future Decennial Censuses.

I appreciate your continued interest in the Census Bureau's work. If you have additional questions, please do not hesitate to contact Michael Platt, Jr., Assistant Secretary for Legislative and Intergovernmental Affairs, at (202) 482-3663.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Wilbur Ross", with a stylized flourish at the end.

Wilbur Ross